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*TWO FORGOTTEN CREEDS*

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For the modern theologian there is an all-encompassing bond of perfectness in the New Testament in the doctrine of the Logos, found in the Johannine gospel and epistles. It links together the christology of the Synoptic writings, Mark, Matthew, Luke-Acts, and that of the epistles. It combines the primitive doctrine of Jesus the faithful "Servant" of God, glorified and exalted to God's right hand—a doctrine of "apotheosis," as Baur called it—with the Pauline doctrine of "incarnation,"—Christ a pre-existent being, agent of creation, in the form and likeness of God, but self-emptying and abased, made for a little while lower than the angels, that for the suffering of death he might be made eternally higher than they, heir and lord of the creation. In the one—the Petrine christology, as we may call it because it is mainly represented in the speeches of Peter in Acts 2-5—the residence in heaven is an episode. God has taken up his faithful Servant for a short interval to his own right hand, delivering him out of the power of death, that, when his people have repented of their wicked rejection of him, he may send him again as the Christ, to restore the kingdom to Israel and reign forever on the throne of David in the renewed and glorified Jerusalem. In the other christology—the Pauline—the residence on earth is the episode. The drama's beginning and ending is in heaven. Viewed thus "under the aspect of the eternal" the brief period of abasement, poverty, and suffering, undertaken for the "reconciliation" of the animate world, is scarcely a moment of time. For our sakes the eternal Son of God "became poor," he emptied himself and took upon him the form of a slave, and became obedient unto death, yea, even the (slave's) death of the cross; but therefore also "God highly exalted him and gave him the Name which is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Here, combined already by Paul, are two doctrines of the sonship of Jesus literally as wide apart as heaven and earth. The one had been propagated on Hebrew soil, where the Messianic hope had been gradually transcendentalized until the Redeemer of Israel could only be conceived as operating from "the clouds of heaven." The other had been propagated on Hellenistic soil, where doctrines of the descent, conflict, and ascent of redeemer-gods (*avatar*-doctrines) furnished the moulds of thought, as having long been the most vital element of popular religion.

Centuries of perpetual adjustment and adaptation have veiled for us the difficulties of harmonizing these two opposite modes of religious thinking. Having been taught the creeds of Christendom from our childhood, we think it nothing strange that our religion should have this double ancestry, and throughout its history should have found the chief task among all its doctrinal debates to be the work of so defining its doctrine of Jesus as Lord as to lose no atom of value from either its Hebrew or its Hellenistic inheritance. But time was when the amalgamation was still a problem. Beyond all other factors in the adjustment wherein the church ultimately rested was the Johannine element, an adaptation to their problem of the *logos*-doctrine of Heraclitus and the Stoics. A full generation after the death of Paul there appeared at Ephesus, birthplace of Heraclitus and chief seat of the mission work of Paul, a gospel which reinterpreted the story of Jesus as it had become current through the Synoptic writers. Everywhere the new gospel was recognized as "the spiritual gospel," because it presented the story of Jesus in its theological significance. At the beginning it supplied that Pauline doctrine of pre-existence so conspicuously lacking in its predecessors. Indeed, it exhibited the entire life of Jesus, including his death and resurrection, as a "manifestation of the glory" of the incarnate *Logos*, enlightening and "reconciling" the world. The gospel story no longer appeared merely that of a man who from time to time in his earthly career, and ultimately in his resurrection, had been "glorified." The transfiguration extended throughout.

In view of its late appearance, and the fact that it does not seem to have been originally put forth under any apostolic authority. the march of the Fourth Gospel and its accompanying epistles

toward general acceptance in the church must be deemed rapid. Opposition was made at Rome, and lasted well into the third century; but this opposition assailed the Ephesian canon as a whole, being particularly directed at the Book of Revelation. It arose through dislike of the doctrine of Montanus and his followers, who had brought with them from Phrygia these "Johannine" writings and rested on them. The obnoxious feature accordingly was not the logos-doctrine of the gospel, but the millenarian doctrine of Revelation, which is not really akin to the gospel and epistles. For this reason we hear much less of the opposition to these. With the exclusion of the Montanists and the very general discrediting of Revelation, opposition to the gospel soon faded out. "Johannine" christology became the generally received orthodoxy of the church Catholic, as indeed the doctrine of the logos in somewhat different forms had already found acceptance in Ignatius (A.D. 115) and Justin (153), though without appeal to "John." In these two writers, both intimately connected with Ephesus, it is just possible (in Ignatius scarcely possible) to make out traces of acquaintance with the Fourth Gospel. But both, while the authority to which they appeal is drawn from Synoptic tradition, yet have a doctrine of the logos kindred to that of the Johannine writings. Justin's form of the doctrine may even be said to be modelled after it. Here is the great and significant difference between the last quarter of the second century and the earlier time. It is not that there is no logos-doctrine in the earlier (Paul himself has a pronounced doctrine of the logos, though he avoids the word), but that after A.D. 175 the doctrine begins to be "Johannine" and to appeal to the Fourth Gospel as authority. When we come to Irenaeus (185-200), the battle for Johannine christology is already almost won. Now the authority of the Apostle John is directly invoked in its favor. Irenaeus, indeed, still inveighs against "those wretched men" (anti-montanists) who in their dislike of "the gift of the Spirit" recently poured out (in Phrygia) "reject that aspect of evangelic truth presented by John's gospel, setting aside both the gospel and the prophetic Spirit" (in the book of Revelation). But the opponents of the Ephesian scriptures were fighting against fate. Already the canon of four gospels which Irenaeus advocates had been generally

adopted in Syria (Tatian, Theophilus of Antioch), and Irenaeus himself was quite in harmony with the prevailing disposition of the church. Men were ready to welcome the Fourth Gospel as at least on a par with its predecessors. For the orthodox mind of the second century it met a long-felt want. Gentile thinkers, trained in the school of Paul but unable to find in the older gospels adequate anchorage for their doctrines of pre-existence and incarnation, felt that at last the story of Jesus had been adequately presented. Clement of Alexandria expresses the mind of the age in asserting that John had read the work of his predecessors and had approved it as correctly relating "the external things," but wrote his own gospel at the solicitation of friends (an inference from Jn. 21<sup>24</sup>) to present the spiritual significance of the matter.

How interesting, then, it would be, might we but bring again to life some unsophisticated Christian of Rome of the period before the doctrine of the *logos* had made its way thither, and draw out his christological ideas! There is the letter of Clement, written to the Corinthians on behalf of the church in Rome, about A.D. 95. Clement knows the letters of Paul and quotes them. He refers specifically to that which the Apostle had written to the Corinthians (our First Corinthians; Second Corinthians is not mentioned). With the anonymous Epistle to the Hebrews he shows himself very familiar. He has traces of acquaintance with First Peter and James, though they are not referred to under any names. He also in two passages quotes at some length words of Jesus. The first quotation corresponds to Mt. 5 7, 6 14, 7 1, 2 and Lk. 6 31, 36-38; the second corresponds to Mt. 26 24, 18 6 and Lk. 22 22, 17 1, 2. Neither quotation employs the terms of either of our gospels. Both are introduced with the formula, "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus." Beyond this Clement is scarcely affected by any New Testament writing. "Scripture" to him, as to the New Testament writers, is still simply "the Law and the Prophets"—with considerable latitude as regards canonicity. Clement recalls, and expects his readers to recall, "the good Apostles Peter and Paul," who after many labors and sufferings had "gone to their appointed place of glory." He repeats in one or two passages expressions which remind us of Paul's

doctrine of pre-existence. He tells us (42 1) that "Jesus Christ was sent forth from God." In particular he adopts the phraseology of Hebrews 1 3-5, 7, 13 in speaking of Jesus (ch. 36) as the adopted Son of God, a mirror of the Father. In short, catholicity is almost his distinctive trait. But Clement is too strictly dependent for his religious ideas<sup>1</sup> on training of Jewish type, to show any trace of real sympathy with Hellenistic doctrines of redemption. One may question whether even his reverence for Paul makes him actually share the doctrine of his christological authority with regard to the self-abasement (kenosis) of Christ Jesus, though he seems to echo Paul's thought in referring to Christ (ch. 16) as "the sceptre of God" who "came not in the pomp of arrogance or of pride, *though he might have done so*, but in lowliness of mind, according as the Holy Spirit spake concerning him," quoting thereupon Is. 53 1-12. In reality Clement's fundamental conception of Christ is identical with that which forms the small distinctive element of First Peter. There are even many passages where he unmistakably rests upon this epistle, though his conception of Jesus as the suffering "Servant" of Deutero-Isaiah cannot be solely derived from it. This conception is fragmentarily traceable in nearly all the New Testament writings, though in none does it form the distinctive note save in documents which directly or indirectly put forward the name of Peter. Luke-Acts has a special application of it; First Peter mingles it with its copious borrowings from Paul; Clement makes it predominant. Elsewhere it comes to the surface only in a few ritual prayers and other incorporated early material distinguished by a peculiar employment of the Isaian messianic title, the "*Servant*" (*παῖς*) of God. We naturally expect no traces in Clement of the Johannine doctrine of the logos. As already stated, it is not even clear that he fully entered into the doctrine of pre-existence which he found in Paul and Hebrews.

With greater reason we might expect to find in Clement's christology some trace at least of the primitive "Adoptionism"

<sup>1</sup> Harnack (Sitzungsberichte of the Berlin Academy, 1909) takes exception to the general critical judgment which pronounces Clement a Jew. Harnack, however, would not deny that his religious ideas show in marked degree their Jewish schooling.

which characterizes our Gospel of Mark. This gospel represents the earliest known attempt to outline the career of Jesus. It is so early that although many allusions exist to further evangelic material, scarcely any of it has survived save that here included. When our first and third gospels were written (90-100), scarcely anything else of a *narrative* character was deemed worthy of admission. The Gospel of Mark, we should infer, was a writing of extraordinary influence and authority, and ancient tradition and modern criticism concur in assigning its origin to Rome, not far from A.D. 75. Now the anecdotes of Mark are put together in the supreme interest of the evangelist's christology. The purpose, from the story of the baptism with the voice from heaven to the testimony of the centurion at the foot of the cross, and of the angels at the empty tomb, is to prove Jesus to be the Son of God. For this the words and deeds of Jesus are related, especially the wonders wrought by him, and the voices and signs from heaven at the beginning, middle, and end of his ministry. But Mark's picture of "Jesus the Son of God," while unavoidably embodying certain traits of the portrait of the suffering Servant, makes a radical alteration of the type. Not "the meekness and lowliness of Christ" are the predominant traits, but a "demonstration of the Spirit and of power."

To Paul, as doubtless to other evangelizing "apostles" of the new faith, the phenomena of the Spirit, miracles, "prophecy," "tongues," had been the proof that Jesus *after his exaltation* was endowed with "the powers of the age to come." They were the ocular proof to hearers of the gospel message that he had ascended to the right hand of God, from whence he was "pouring forth" the Spirit. The "gifts" and miracles were a guarantee to believers of their inheritance "reserved in heaven" for a new age about to dawn. Neither Paul, nor Hebrews, nor First Peter suggests in any way any occurrence of them before Jesus had been glorified. On the contrary, "he was crucified through weakness." Mortality, suffering, subjection to the common lot of those "born of women," are the features emphasized in his earthly career. In Mark's collection of anecdotes the "gifts" and "powers" are carried back into the hitherto neglected period of Jesus' earthly career. The reader now learns—for the first time, so far

as we are informed—that Jesus was not first “declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead” (Rom. 1 3), but that he was so declared from the moment when the Baptist (the promised Elias) anointed him, and “the Spirit” with all its gifts of revelation and power descended “into” him. At that moment a “voice from heaven” declared his true character. The manifestation, as Mark further relates, had been repeated and emphasized in the presence of three intimate disciples immediately after Jesus’ declaration that as the Christ he must suffer the death of the cross, and pains are taken to explain how the story had failed to become current until “after the Son of Man was risen from the dead.” In fact, the most brilliant characterization of the Gospel of Mark which has appeared in our generation finds its distinctive editorial characteristic to be just here. The evangelist has introduced a supernatural Being upon the stage; he finds himself continually obliged to explain how this could be and yet produce so slight effect even on the disciples; and he meets the difficulty by an adaptation of Paul’s doctrine of the hardening of Israel.<sup>2</sup> Jesus purposely “concealed” his messiahship.

The appearance of the Gospel of Mark could make nothing less than an epoch in the history of christology. It is not likely to have been the only, or even the first, attempt to prove Jesus the Son of God from the events of his earthly career; but it was at any rate so much the most important that it practically superseded all others. But from Mark alone it is impossible to derive any doctrine of the person of Christ which transcends “adoptionism.” As Wellhausen says: “In Mark Jesus descends into the Jordan a simple man. He comes up out of it the Son of God.” “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ” in this gospel parallels the beginning of the Christian life of every believer. Normally, the convert’s experience is expressed in the phrase, “And when they were baptized, the Spirit fell upon them and they spake with tongues and prophesied” (Acts 10 44 ff., 19 5 ff.). To Paul life under control of the Spirit had been the proof of “adoption” (Rom. 8 14). It was natural that Mark should conceive the sonship of Jesus in similar terms. But Paul had also

<sup>2</sup> With Mk. 4 11 f. compare Rom. 11 8.



a doctrine of a pre-existent Christ, a doctrine which he nowhere brings into express relation to the primitive christology of exaltation of the "Servant" (Is. 52 13, Ps. 110 1), and this finds no expression whatever in Mark. That Jesus had been exalted to "the right hand of God" far above all angels, principalities, and powers was matter of common belief. That was implied in the common confession of Jesus as Lord. The distinctively Pauline doctrine, which finds no place even in the later Synoptic literature, though adopted in Hebrews and First Peter, is the identification of the glorified Christ with the pre-existent Spirit. To Paul "the Lord is the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3 17), through whom, as the divine Wisdom, the world was created, and by whom "all things consist." The creation of the world was to him in so real a sense the act of Christ that those who "have Christ's mind" are thereby admitted to the secret (*μυστήριον*) of the cosmos, in a manner which no mere cosmological speculation can rival (1 Cor. 2 6-16, 8 6). As Christ was manifest in the creative Wisdom of God, the agent and "artificer" of the universe according to Hebrew philosophy, and the "effluence" from God that "holdeth all things together" (Wisdom. 1 7, 7 21-8 1), so also he was manifest in the giving of the Torah, always to orthodox Judaism the supreme Wisdom (Dt. 4 6; compare, for instance, Ecclesiasticus. 24 23-29). Paul agrees with the author of Baruch (Bar. 3 9-4 1) that the words of Dt. 30 12, 13, on which he builds his own, "Say not, Who shall ascend into heaven? Who shall descend into the abyss? The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart," apply to the divine Wisdom-Spirit. He goes beyond Baruch and orthodox Judaism when he specifically identifies this redemptive Wisdom-Spirit with Christ (Rom. 10 6-9), and the "word" with "the word of faith which we preach."

This was the new point of Pauline christological doctrine, not that Jesus had been exalted far above all angels, principalities, and powers, but that "he that descended [into the lower parts of the earth] is *the same also* that afterward *ascended*" (Eph. 4 10). This, accordingly, is what Paul labors to prove from Scripture, as well as from the present testimony of the outpoured Spirit. We observe, then, that it is from the Pauline epistles and not from Synoptic tradition that our fourth evangelist derives

his conception of Jesus as having unbroken remembrance while on earth of "the glory which he had with the Father before the world was," and as able to tell "heavenly things," the things which he had "seen with his Father," as none but an incarnate heavenly being could (Jn. 3 12 f., 31 f., 17 5). Paul thought of Jesus as a being who, "though he was rich, yet for your sakes became poor," who "emptied himself" and took on him "the form of a slave," and yet in the "emptying" had not relinquished identity of consciousness. His "mind" still retained the consciousness of the creative purpose, his will was the same will which set the example of supreme self-abasement and obedience unto death (2 Cor. 8 9, Phil. 2 7 ff., 1 Cor. 2 11-16). To understand the New Testament, nothing is more vital than an appreciation of this amalgamation of Pauline with Synoptic christology as we see it ultimately accomplished in the Johannine writings. Our present purpose is to look at two relatively forgotten writings from the very midst of the transition.

There was small reluctance on the part of Paul's fellow-laborers in the faith to accept his "mystery of godliness," even though it did not profess to have been "received." The pre-existence of Jesus as the divine Wisdom-Spirit seemed to them a perfectly reasonable belief. But how and when the descent and incarnation of this Wisdom-Spirit had taken place Paul had omitted to state. Hence the incessant restatements regarding "the beginning of the gospel." To Mark, as we have said, the beginning was Jesus' *adoption* to sonship by the descent "into" him of the Spirit at his baptism, impelling him to his career. Jesus had experienced to the full what to believers is partial. In the language of an early uncanonical gospel, "The whole fountain of the Holy Ghost descended upon him." The obverse of this emphasis on the baptismal adoption in Mark is the omission of an important element of the primitive christology—the fact that Jesus had been "of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Rom. 1 3, 9 5; compare Heb. 7 14, Clement of Rome 32 1). Mark not only omits the genealogy, but places in the mouth of Jesus an argument to prove that the basing of the claims of the Christ on his Davidic pedigree is a mere fallacy of "the scribes" (Mk. 12 35-37). With the author of Hebrews Mark holds that the office of the Christ is "without a genealogy."

The average modern Christian naturally reads the Gospel of Mark through several pairs of spectacles furnished by later evangelists and interpreters. Are they not all orthodox men, Christian men? And does it not follow that they all say the same? But ancient readers saw decided differences. Cerinthus and those who drew a distinction between the spiritual aeon Christ and the man Jesus, preferred this gospel, because (to their view) it represented that the man Jesus became at his baptism the "receptacle" of the Christ-Spirit, which again withdrew from him before the tragic end.<sup>3</sup> Conversely, orthodox evangelists hastened to amend its all too vulnerable "beginning." Matthew and Luke not only restore the genealogies establishing Jesus' descent from David, but present independently new narratives of his birth, to prove in forms the most emphatic the Jewish mind could conceive that Jesus had not become "the Son of God" at his baptism, but had been such from his mother's womb. But even this, as our fourth evangelist perceives, is far from satisfying the requirement of the Pauline doctrine. The "beginning" according to John is with the logos "in the bosom of the Father" before the foundation of the world.

The facts we cite indicate how great readjustments of thought would be sure to follow, and did follow, the appearance of our Gospel of Mark. Its doctrine of the sonship of Jesus was not a mere commonplace of the times. If Clement, writing his long epistle from the same community and only a score of years thereafter, shows no trace whatever of acquaintance with it, and presents a conception of Jesus modelled wholly after the pattern of the suffering Servant of Deutero-Isaiah and First Peter, we must lay it to predisposition and not to ignorance; for Mark cannot have been unknown to him. To some of Clement's contemporaries at Rome its christology must have come as the solution of a great problem. There is evidence that the Roman church was agitated over the questions raised by the opening chapters of Matthew about A.D. 119. Certainly it had then not yet been affected by the logos-doctrine of the Ephesian evangelist. Mark's gospel was to Clement far from new, but it surely stands for what was then advanced christology. Especially would it appeal to the

<sup>3</sup> Irenaeus, *Haer.* i, 3013, iii, 117.

convert of gentile birth, harmonizing his ideas of the divine Lord, the Son of the living God, whom he had learned in the church to worship as redeemer and giver of eternal life, with the little he could learn from tradition regarding Jesus' earthly career. How instructive, then, if we could light upon the testimony of some primitive Roman Christian, a convert from paganism, forced as best he could to adjust to the doctrine of the church his ideas of the attainment of immortality through aid of redeemer-gods! How would he deal with Paul's "mystery" of Christ on the one side, and with Petrine tradition on the other?

Now in the things which we are saying the chief point is this. We have such a witness, a contemporary of Clement at Rome, one who refers to Clement by name as still charged with the particular duty of "sending to foreign cities" such writings as we know he had sent to Corinth, and that which our author hopes he will now put in circulation.<sup>4</sup>

Hermas, the Roman freedman, author of the primitive Christian allegory entitled *The Shepherd*, is better known to us in matters of personal character and history than almost any other Christian of his day. Much appears in the book itself. In addition we learn from the Muratorian Fragment (A.D. 185) that it was "written very recently [as compared with the apostolic writings], in our own times, in the city of Rome, during the bishopric of his brother Pius" (A.D. 138-154). The lateness of the date thus assigned is probably an exaggeration due to the fragmentist's strong disapproval of the canonical standing others were according to the book. The contents are quite too primitive to admit it. Obviously it would be irreconcilable with the mention of Clement as foreign secretary of the church, unless this reference were the subtle device of a forger, and the *Shepherd* is anything but subtle. Moreover, the heresies of Marcion (140) and Valentinus (145) have not yet appeared above the horizon. Finally, the remarkably strong position occupied by the book among the writings admitted to public reading in the church, in spite of its more than meagre literary pretensions, would be unaccountable after 140. The fragmentist, an opponent of the "Cataphrygian" (Montanist) heresy, is forced to protest against the *Shepherd* being "read

<sup>4</sup> Hermas, Vis. ii, 4.

in church to the people" as if it could be numbered "among the prophets" or the "writings of the apostles." Still, he does not treat the book with the severity of Tertullian. It is not to him "adulterous" or apocryphal. He thinks "it ought to be read" as edifying, though not as authoritative. The fragmentist accordingly, at about A.D. 185, stands at the parting of the ways. He has a double battle to fight. Hermas must be excluded; the Johannine writings must be included. But the support of the *Shepherd* could hardly have been so strong, had the book been as "recent" as its opponent declares. In A.D. 185 at Rome Hermas represented the old theology, John the new.

Hermas, then, may be regarded as a later contemporary of Clement. But what a difference! Clement's sixty-five chapters are occupied in about one-third their length by copious extracts from the Greek Old Testament, a Bible which he almost knows by heart, not only making its exposition the basis of all his own instruction but commending it to his readers as "oracles of God" which "cannot be broken" and must be "searched into" for all truth. Of the ideas of Hellenistic redemption-religions he shows no trace whatever. No wonder his conception of Christ is almost a transcript of the suffering "Servant" of Deutero-Isaiah. Hermas, in a writing of considerably more than twice the length, has but one "Scripture" quotation. It is not too long to cite in full: "'The Lord is nigh unto them that turn unto him,' as it is written in *Eldad and Modat*, who prophesied to the (chosen) people in the wilderness."<sup>5</sup> The contrast is not all to be accounted for by difference of subject. Hermas does indeed rely upon his "angel of prophecy" as the source of authority and edification rather than "the Scriptures" which are looked to by Clement. But while he knows something of their general story, and certainly would not have denied their authority, he has nothing of the control over them which to a teacher of Jewish training like Clement makes them the indispensable medium of both his thought and his expression. The contrast is that between a convert from Judaism and one who, like Ignatius, uses moulds of thought inherited from the pagan world.

<sup>5</sup> Hermas, Vis. ii, 3. Eldad and Modat was an apocryphal romance of which little is now known. Its characters were taken from Num. 11 27.

In respect to New Testament writings the contrast is far less marked, though mainly because Clement himself quotes so little from them. Hermas too has probably read Hebrews, though as compared with Clement his reflection of its phraseology is very slight. He has, however, a relatively large number of reflections of the so-called Epistle of James. Here and there he shows traces of acquaintance with the two epistles of Paul most used by Clement, First Corinthians and Ephesians, and also some with First Peter.

But these relations, while of value as showing the type of Christian thought prevalent at Rome at the beginning of the second century, are of subordinate interest. What most concerns us is to observe how the mind of Hermas is affected by the doctrine of Jesus as redeemer of the world; for such was the missionary proclamation of the new faith.

Hermas' employments of gospel material are too slight for the determination of literary dependence with precision. In most cases the utmost we can say is that he shows acquaintance with Synoptic tradition, passages recalling the phraseology of Matthew being, as usual, relatively frequent, with no certain trace of either Luke or John. On the other hand, if we ask by what influence his conception of Jesus as "Son of God" has been formed, the contrast with Clement is marked. For the first time outside the New Testament itself we come upon traces of the employment of our second gospel. Actual passages from Mark are not cited, but Hermas' doctrine of the person of Christ is hardly explicable without it. In particular his employment of the title "Son of God" seems to show Mark's influence, standing as it does in extraordinary contrast with Clement. The latter in all his long epistle has but one occurrence of the title, namely, that where (36 4) he briefly reproduces the argument of Heb. 1 5 ff. Equally striking is the total absence from Hermas of any mention of the names "Jesus" and "Christ," which occur forty-eight times in Clement.

We come thus after preliminaries which, if protracted, have not been without their definite purpose, to the particular phenomenon which justifies the title under which we write. Hermas' doctrine of "the Son of God" is emphatically a "creed outworn."

If any reader doubts the fact, we shall venture to class him with those who, if once familiar with this practical but somewhat prolix father, have not recently refreshed their memories, and who may therefore be willing to take a second look.

At the outset we encounter little that need seem strange in a church nourished upon the Pauline epistles. In the ninth Similitude the interpreting "Shepherd," who (he it observed) is not Christ but "the angel of repentance," explains the significance of Hermas' vision of the great tower founded on a rock in the midst of waters. It represents the church, the (new) chosen people, the stones which compose it being brought through the water (in baptism) and built into it by angels. Chapter 12 runs as follows:—

"First of all, sir," say I, "explain this to me. The rock and the gate,<sup>6</sup> what is it?" "This rock," saith he, "and gate, is the Son of God." "How, sir," say I, "is the rock ancient but the gate recent?" "Listen," saith he, "and understand, foolish man. The Son of God is older than all His creation, so that he became the Father's adviser in His creation. Therefore also he is ancient." "But the gate, why is it recent, sir?" say I. "Because," saith he, "he was manifested in the last days of the consummation: therefore the gate was made recent, that they which are to be saved may enter through it into the kingdom of God. Didst thou see," saith he, "that the stones which came through the gate have gone to the building of the tower, but those which came not through it were cast away again to their own place?" "I saw, sir," say I. "Thus," saith he, "no one shall enter into the kingdom of God, except he receive [in baptism] the name of his Son. . . . Didst thou see," saith he, "the multitude that is building the tower?" "I saw it, sir," say I. "They," saith he, "are all glorious angels. With these, then, the Lord is surrounded as a wall, but the gate is the Son of God; there is this one entrance only to the Lord. No one, then, shall enter in unto Him otherwise than through his Son. Didst thou see," saith he, "the six men, and the glorious and mighty man in the midst of them, him that walked about the tower and rejected the stones from the building?" "I saw him, sir," say I. "The glorious man," saith he, "is the Son of God, and those six are the glorious angels who guard him on the right hand and on the left.

<sup>6</sup> The doctrine of Christ as the gate (πύλη; not θύρα, "door") plays an important part in early Christian apologetic (cf. Hegesippus' account of the martyrdom of James in Euseb. H. E. ii, 23 8). The reference is to Ps. 118 20. "This is the gate of the Lord, the righteous shall enter in by it."

Of these glorious angels not one," saith he, "shall enter in unto God without him; whosoever shall not receive his name, shall not enter into the kingdom of God."

We are familiar from the Pauline epistles with the idea of Christ as the creative Wisdom of God, which in Pseudo-Barnabas (*cir.* 133) already takes the definite form that "God said to the Son, Let us make man in our image."<sup>7</sup> Revelation (1 4, 3 1, 4 5, and 5 6) has familiarized us more or less with the (Persian) "seven spirits of God" ever before his throne and "sent forth into all the earth." If we can adjust our minds to the mixture of metaphors by which at the same time the "Beloved Son" of God is first the Rock on which "the whole creation is sustained," including the tower the stones of which are the redeemed people of God, and secondly the Gate which admits to the tower, and thirdly the great and glorious Man surpassing in stature the tower itself (though he walks around it and in it)—if we can further deliberately close our minds to any thought of the historical Jesus, and think only in terms of "the heavenly Man," the second Adam, and similar transcendental beings of the unseen world, we shall have no great difficulty in taking Hermas' point of view. From having had practically no significance in Clement, that phase of the doctrine of the person of Christ which is concerned with the pre-existence has suddenly occupied the field of vision. Hermas adopts almost the language of 1 Pet. 1 20, sharing Clement's use of this epistle but with a widely different christology. As Wisdom-Spirit Christ was the counsellor and agent of God in creation, "sustainer of the universe" and Rock of its foundation. He had also become by incarnation and glorification at the end of time, the Gate of access to the kingdom of God. First Peter 1 20 adopts in similar phrase the doctrine of Paul. But how does Hermas relate this transcendental drama of divinity to the story of the Prophet of Nazareth? What of the work of his ministry, his cross, his resurrection? Do these actually have no place in Hermas' scheme of salvation? The answer to our question is contained in Hermas' fifth Similitude, his "parable," as he terms it, of the vineyard.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Barn. 5 5. In Irenaeus the utterance of God in Gen. 1 26 is said to be addressed to "his Wisdom."

<sup>8</sup> Hermas, Sim. v, 2-7; cf. Mk. 12 1-8 and Is. 5 1-7.



Hear the parable which I shall tell thee relating to fasting.<sup>9</sup> A certain man had an estate and many slaves, and a portion of his estate he planted as a vineyard; and choosing out a certain slave who was trusty and well pleasing, held in honor, he called him to him, and saith unto him: "Take this vineyard which I have planted, and fence it till I come, but do nothing else to the vineyard. Now keep this my commandment, and thou shalt be free in my house." Then the master of the slave went away to travel abroad. When, then, he had gone away, the slave took and fenced the vineyard; and having finished the fencing of the vineyard, he noticed that the vineyard was full of weeds. So he reasoned within himself, saying, "This command of my lord I have carried out. I will next dig this vineyard, and it shall be neater when it is digged; and when it hath no weeds it will yield more fruit, because not choked by the weeds." He took and digged the vineyard, and all the weeds that were in the vineyard he plucked up. And that vineyard became very neat and flourishing, when it had no weeds to choke it. After a time the master of the slave and of the estate came, and he went into the vineyard. And seeing the vineyard neatly fenced and digged as well, and all the weeds plucked up, and the vines flourishing, he rejoiced exceedingly at what his slave had done. So he called his beloved son, who was his heir, and the friends who were his advisers, and told them what he had commanded his slave, and how much he had found done. And they rejoiced with the slave at the testimony which his master had borne to him. And he saith to them: "I promised this slave his freedom if he should keep the commandment which I commanded him; but he kept my commandment and did a good work besides to my vineyard, and pleased me greatly. For this work, therefore, which he hath done I desire to make him joint-heir with my son, because, when the good thought struck him, he did not neglect it, but fulfilled it." In this purpose the son of the master agreed with him, that the slave should be made joint-heir with the son. After some few days his master made a feast, and sent to him many dainties from the feast. But when the slave received the dainties sent to him by the master, he took what was sufficient for him, and distributed the rest to his fellow-slaves. And his fellow-slaves, when they received the dainties, rejoiced, and began to pray for him, that he might find greater favor with the master, because he had treated them so handsomely. All these things which had taken place his master heard, and again rejoiced greatly at his deed. So the master called

<sup>9</sup> The preceding chapter relates to the fast which Hermas has been observing, and which he calls "keeping a station." The Shepherd has applied to it doctrine reminding us of Is. 58 and Mk. 2 18-22.

together again his friends and his son, and announced to them the deed that he had done with regard to his dainties which he had received; and they still more approved of his resolve, that his slave should be made joint-heir with his son.

In spite of some apparent reminiscences of the gospel parable of the householder who, going to a far country to return again, appoints to his slaves their various tasks,<sup>10</sup> we have little difficulty in recognizing that here, as the Shepherd presently explains, "The lord of the estate is He that created all things and set them in order and endowed them with power." We might perhaps also recognize, without resort to the key, that "the vines are this people whom He himself planted (Ps. 80, Is. 5 1-7); and the fences are the holy angels of the Lord who keep together his people; and the weeds which are plucked up from the vineyard are the transgressions of the servants of God." But where does Jesus Christ appear? Is Christ the "slave," who was intrusted with the vineyard and did more than he was commanded? Or is he "the beloved son, who was the heir" of the master, whose place is never regarded otherwise than in the mansion, along with "the lord of the estate" and "the friends who were his advisers"? The slave is a faithful and obedient worker, who when he has done all is not restricted to the confession, "We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which it was our duty to do" (Lk. 17 10), but can lay claim to more. His obedience earned him his freedom. His works of supererogation drew to him the gracious favor of the lord of all, who with the approval of the beloved son, the heir, and the counsellor friends (afterwards explained to be "the holy angels which were first created"), gave him participation in the inheritance. As a foretaste of this he receives "dainties" from the master's table, and these he shares with his fellow-slaves, obtaining thus their intercession which still further assures his master's favor. In some respects this may correspond to our idea of the ministry of Jesus, but it certainly is not that of Mark, nor of the Synoptists, still less that of John. So far as sonship is attributed to the slave at all, it is only by anticipation. He is, indeed, destined to ultimate exaltation, and receives a token of it in gifts of "dainties" from the heavenly table, which are subsequently explained to be

<sup>10</sup> Mt. 25 14-30 and parallels.

“the commandments which God gave to his people through his Son.” But aside from this there is nothing in this present world, if ever, to separate the slave from his fellow-slaves. He does not even intercede for them, but they for him. On the whole one is more disposed to look to “the beloved son, the heir,” as the representative of Christ, and the slave as only a type of faithful Christians who in the end become sons according to Paul’s saying: “If children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8 17).

It is time, then, that we called in to our aid the angel-interpreter. For Hermas, too, had misgivings as to the propriety of this representation, and asks: “Wherefore, sir, is the Son of God represented in the parable in the guise of a slave?” The answer is instructive:—

“Listen,” said he; “the Son of God is not represented in the guise of a slave, but is represented in great power and lordship.” “How, sir?” say I; “I do not understand.” “Because,” saith he, “God planted the vineyard, that is, he created the (chosen) people, and delivered them over to his Son. And the Son placed the angels in charge of them, to watch over them; and the Son himself cleansed their sins, by laboring much and enduring many toils; for no one can dig without toil or labor. Having himself then cleansed the sins of his people he showed them the paths of life, giving them the law which he received from his Father. Thou seest,” saith he, “that he is himself Lord of the (chosen) people, having received all authority from his Father. But how that the lord took his son and the glorious angels as advisers concerning the inheritance of the slave, listen. The holy pre-existent Spirit, which created the whole creation, God made to descend into the flesh which he chose and dwell there. This flesh, therefore, in which the Holy Spirit dwelt, was subject unto the Spirit, walking honorably in holiness and purity, without in any way defiling the Spirit. When, then, it had lived honorably in chastity, and had labored with the Spirit, and had co-operated with it in everything, behaving itself boldly and bravely, he chose it as a partner with the Holy Spirit; for the career of this flesh pleased the Lord, seeing that while it possessed the Holy Spirit upon the earth it was not defiled. He therefore took the Son as adviser and the glorious angels also, that this flesh too, having served the Spirit unblamably, might have some place of sojourn, and might not seem to have lost the reward for its service; for all flesh which is found undefiled and unspotted, wherein the Holy Spirit dwelt, shall receive a reward. Now thou hast the interpretation of this parable also.”

At first glance the reader of this succinct history of redemption is not likely to be struck with the resemblance to the prologue of the Gospel of John, though in point of fact the author of John 1 1-5, 9-14, 16-18, is really dealing in his own way with the same problem. The confusing thing to the modern reader is the use of the term "Son of God," which is the *only* term used by Hermas for the Redeemer. He applies it primarily to "the holy pre-existent Spirit, the creator of the whole creation," and thinks of the entire work of redemption (wherein the cross plays no part whatever) as effected by this Spirit. The Spirit-Son, accordingly, resembles the "Wisdom of God" in the Sapiential books much more closely than the Greek logos; for it is not merely a creative, but also a redemptive, Spirit, "loving mankind," going to seek them as they wander in the paths of folly, "in every generation entering into holy souls and making men to be prophets and friends of God."<sup>11</sup> In this sense the Spirit-Son "cleansed the sins of the (chosen) people." As the creative logos in John 1 1-18 was from the beginning "the light of men" coming into the world and enlightening it, though unrecognized, "coming to his own though his own people received him not,"—as the logos ultimately "became flesh and tabernacled among us," so also in Hermas' more primitive christology the Spirit-Son received charge of "the people" from the beginning. He at once appointed the angels, who in Jewish angelology are called "the watchers," "to watch over them." This is represented in the allegory as the "fencing" of the vineyard. The Spirit-Son next engaged in the disciplinary process of the Old Testament revelation, "weeding out" the wickednesses of the (chosen) people, and "giving them the law which he received from his Father." At this point in the interpretation no distinction is made between the Mosaic and the Christian law, though previously the "dainties" of the "parable" had been explained to be the "commandments which [God] gave to his people through his Son." Hermas makes no real distinction. Both are thought of together as "showing the paths of life." But at this point comes a break. The Shepherd, having shown how the Spirit-Son had been in his own person "Lord of the (chosen) people,"—as against the "watcher" angels

<sup>11</sup> Wisdom 1 6, 7 23-27.

of the gentile nations,<sup>12</sup>—proceeds to the specific incarnation of gospel story. It belonged to God's administration of his vineyard to cause the Spirit-Son to "dwell down" in the flesh that he chose. When in the particular instance in view (the ministry of Jesus) "this flesh in which the Holy Spirit dwelt had been completely subject to it, walking honorably in holiness and purity," doing even more than the commandment, the glorious first-created angels<sup>13</sup> were called in council together with the Spirit-Son, with the result that "this flesh" was made immortal. As specific type of mortal man, he was given a "place of sojourn" in the heavenly court and made co-heir with the Spirit-Son. Such is *Hermas'* understanding of the doctrine that Jesus was "declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1 3). He was the supreme exemplar and nothing more.

We are dealing with a naïve attempt to explain how "the holy pre-existent Spirit which created the whole creation" can be the son and heir of God (according to Paul's teaching that "the Lord is the Spirit"), without at the same time doing injustice to the "Petrine" christology of the "exalted" Servant. *Hermas'* creed is the antithesis of that of his earlier contemporary Clement; for he approaches the matter from the standpoint of Greek dualism, while Clement approaches it from that of Hebrew messianism. Neither could survive; for both lack the solvent of the Johannine doctrine of the logos. *Hermas* is not in reality a trinitarian at all. For all that logic requires, he might be a unitarian. In point of fact he is neither. We can call him nothing else than a "dualitarian." The only strictly divine beings in his heavenly court are the Father and the pre-existent Spirit-Son. He has an "adoptionist" doctrine of a certain sort, but it does not affect the earthly life of Jesus; for the slave does not really become the Son of God until taken up into heaven. The title is applied to him generally, but only in a proleptic sense. While on earth Jesus was a "vessel of

<sup>12</sup> Compare Clement's interpretation in ch. 29 of Dt. 32 8 f. (LXX).

<sup>13</sup> That is, the six archangels "that were created first of all, unto whom the Lord delivered all his creation to increase and to build it, and to be masters of all creation" (Vis. iii, 4). *Hermas'* heavenly court has points of strong resemblance to the Mazdean. Alongside of Ahura and Mithras stand the six Amesha-spentas and the host of Fravashis.

the Spirit" in the same sense that Paul is so called in Acts, though in higher degree. This sense is made unmistakable by the Shepherd's application of the "parable" which immediately follows:

"I was right glad, sir," say I, "to hear this interpretation."  
 "Listen, now," saith he. "Keep this thy flesh pure and undefiled, that the Spirit which hath descended to dwell in it may bear witness to it, and thy flesh may be justified. See that it never enter into thine heart that this flesh of thine is corruptible, and so thou abuse it in some defilement. For if thou defile thy flesh, thou shalt defile the Holy Spirit also."

Like his orthodox contemporaries, Hermas is emphatic on the doctrine of "the resurrection of the *flesh*,"<sup>14</sup> and applies to it the practical teaching of Rom. 8 1-17, whether he can see his way to reconcile it with 1 Cor. 15 50 or not. But except as to the slave's taking the lead and setting the example for his fellow-slaves, who also receive the "commandments" the Spirit gives him, there is no distinction between its "dwelling down" in him and its "dwelling down" in Hermas or in other men.

Especially instructive is the contrast between Hermas' interpretation of the "cleansing of the sins of the people" and Clement's. In Clement, as in First Peter and the New Testament generally, this is the work of the suffering "Servant," by whose stripes we were healed. Not so here. In Hermas it is the work of the pre-existent Spirit-Son, who "weeded out the transgressions of the servants of God" not by a vicarious sacrifice, but by the laborious husbandry of the Old Testament dispensation. Death of the Spirit-Son was of course inconceivable. The death of Jesus is never mentioned, or even alluded to.<sup>15</sup>

These two almost contemporary writings from the church at Rome in the sub-apostolic age, Clement and Hermas, may probably be taken as fairly typical respectively of the Jewish and gentile elements among Paul's converts. We see in them the effect produced upon their minds by the doctrine of Jesus as the

<sup>14</sup> The original Greek of the so-called Apostles' Creed has "I believe in the resurrection of the flesh" (*σαρκός*), not "body" (*σώματος*).

<sup>15</sup> Harnack, in his recent reconstruction of the primitive Aramaic source Q, notes as the most astounding fact in connection with it, that it yields "no trace of that which in Mark is the chief theme, Jesus' death and resurrection." *Sprüche und Reden Jesu*, p. 171.

Son of God as it came to them from Petrine and Pauline sources respectively. "Creeds outworn" they are; and such are not generally esteemed to be interesting or profitable. But when one is seeking a genuinely historical understanding of his own creed, there is nothing like a return to this forgotten past, a time when the great problem of adjustment of Jewish and gentile religious thought was still unsolved, and when the Gospel of John was still below the horizon.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Since this article was placed in the editor's hands an important study by J. v. Walter, of Breslau, of the christology of Hermas as exhibited in the passage here considered (Sim. V.), has appeared in the *Zts. f. utl. Wiss.* xiv 2 (1913). Von Walter explains the inconsistencies as due to later supplementation by the author. Sim. V 6 4<sup>b</sup>-7 was added to obviate the objection to the parable which would be felt by any orthodox reader of Heb. 1-2, that the slave (Jesus) was placed on a lower rank than the angels. In this interpretation the slave is only "the flesh" in which the holy, pre-existent Spirit dwelt, and which served it, whereas the parable both calls the slave himself the Son of God, and speaks only of his service to "the people" in obedience to "the Lord." If this reasoning be admitted, we have still further interesting evidence of the clash of christological opinion before the introduction of the logos-doctrine as a solvent. In fact the very pages of Hermas in themselves considered will exemplify the collision between apotheosis doctrines and incarnation doctrines.